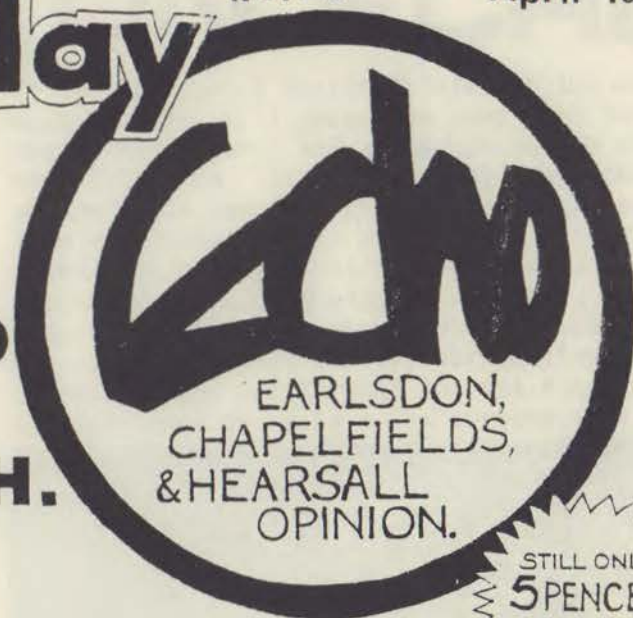


# 2nd Birthday Edition

**YOUR COMMUNITY  
NEWSPAPER IS TWO  
YEARS OLD THIS  
MONTH.**

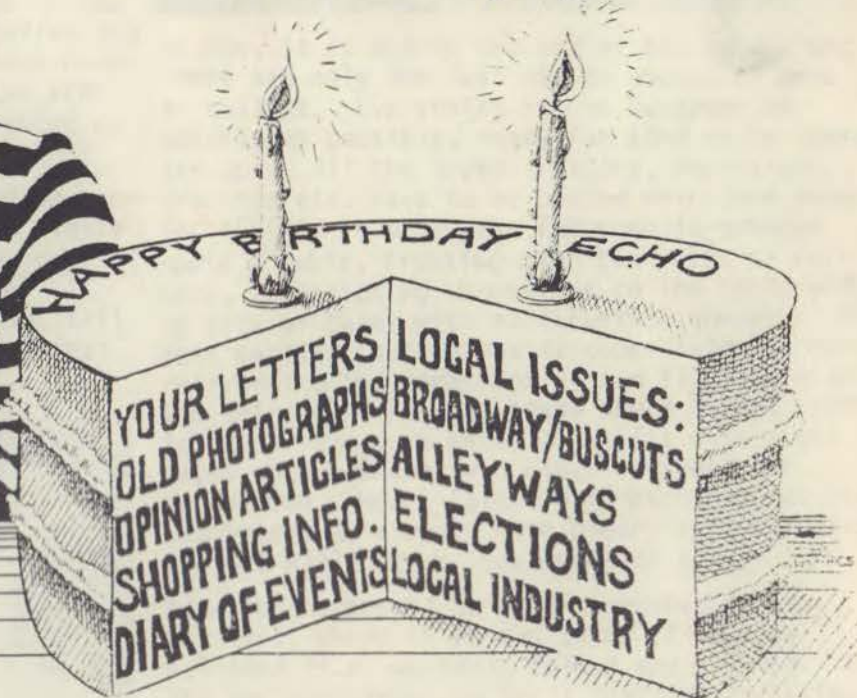
No. 23

April 1981



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**PRIZE COMPETITION -**  
see back page



## EARLSDON ACCEPTS THE CRUMBS

ON 18th MARCH, AT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD IN THE AREA IN RECENT YEARS, LOCAL RESIDENTS DECIDED RELUCTANTLY TO ACCEPT THE USE OF LIMITED COMMUNITY FACILITIES OFFERED IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES' PLANS FOR BROADWAY.

About 130 people attended the meeting at Earlsdon School to hear details about the scheme from Tom White, Director of Social

Services, Alwyn Smith, Vice-Chairman of the Social Services Committee and John White from Age Concern. The meeting had been called by the Broadway Community Centre Steering Committee to enable residents to find out for themselves details about Broadway's future and to decide whether to support community involvement in the plans.

(continued on page 7)



# SPOTLIGHT ON ECHO

Since this is E.C.H.O.'s second birthday issue we thought we would subject readers to a tongue-in-cheek account of how E.C.H.O. is put together.

It sometimes amazes us that ECHO manages to find its way into local shops and pubs regularly at the beginning of each month.

The production of ECHO follows a series of three or four meetings held during the month. The first, since we take ourselves quite seriously, is called a 'Planning Meeting'. We begin by looking through the edition of ECHO which has just come out (provided of course that the printing has not been delayed by 'circumstances beyond our control'). Everyone quickly turns to the articles they have written to reassure themselves that their efforts look as good in print as they expected. After a certain amount of preening has taken place (accompanied by remarks such as "that's come out well") we also look out for mistakes like typographical errors. The typist, of course, lets it be known that such errors would not occur if our handwriting was legible, or if we had read the proofs properly.

Then we get down to the serious business of the meeting. This is of course, drinking coffee and eating biscuits, to provide the sustenance necessary before we can begin to think of the VERY IMPORTANT ISSUES which are to be highlighted or discussed in next month's ECHO.

The content of the next edition is based on contributions, such as readers' letters (so please keep writing to us), and on our own knowledge of what is, or is not, going on in the area. If you think there are issues we have missed, tell us, as we can't always know of everything that is happening.



Photos by Barry K. Smith

Once next month's articles have been agreed, tasks have to be allotted to the members of the Editorial Committee, who at this stage use various methods of pretending not to exist. Once the most reluctant person is dragged out from under the table, everyone is volunteered (whether they like it or not) to look into the subjects to be covered

At the 'Editorial Meeting' later in the month, most articles will have been completed (well, that's the theory) and are subjected to objective criticism. It is highly unlikely that anyone would have their work torn apart completely, although there may be some 'minor' amendments made (and it's surprising what gets 'lost' at the typing stage). However, we soon know we haven't been successful when Chutney the cat (who supervises all our meetings) decides to pop out through the cat flap for a quick prowl to relieve the boredom.



By now, it is nearly the end of the month, and there are only the last minute pieces of news to collect. Everything has to be typed as quickly as possible, ready for ECHO to be 'pasted up'. All the typed articles, photographs, drawings etc. have to be pasted onto card ready for ECHO to be printed. Everyone is grouped round a table, fighting over two pairs of scissors, and sticking themselves to the table and to bits of paper with an excess of cow-gum. At this meeting Chutney really comes into his own, rearranging the pages for us and fighting with the Letraset. At this stage there always seems to be far too much material to fit onto eight pages, but eventually a place is found for everything. Hours later, with each page at last completed, we stagger home bleary-eyed and with fingers still stuck together with glue.

After being pasted up ECHO is rushed to the printers, where if we are lucky it is also collated (i.e. sorted), folded and stapled. On the two occasions (so far!) that the collating machine has broken down, members of the Editorial Committee have dragged in family and neighbours (some more willing than others) to help fold the 1500 copies printed - and that takes some time.

When ECHO is at last ready, the Editorial Committee's intrepid cyclist does an express delivery to all the places that sell it, and we all collapse exhausted, until it's suddenly time for the next Planning Meeting, and the cycle goes on . . . and on . . .

If you would like to join in the fun, please contact us via the E.C.H.O. Box in Earlsdon Library. You don't need any special skills, just enthusiasm and an interest in the area.



# Dear Echo

*your letters page.*

## THANK YOU

St. Barbara's Playgroup wishes to express its most grateful thanks to the 'Earlsdon Kung Fu' group who recently held a dance from which all the profits amounting to £170 were donated to the Playgroup. This was a much appreciated gesture and the money will help provide equipment for the Playgroup.

Jackie Ablewhite (Supervisor),  
St. Barbara's Playgroup,  
Earlsdon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Can I ask you to pass on our grateful thanks to all those people who brought their used postage stamps to Earlsdon Post Office over the Christmas period. The stamps will benefit the Huntington's Chorea Association - a group trying to support sufferers and fund research into this mysterious hereditary illness which upsets mental stability and physical movement. I would also like to thank Mr. Mistry, who kindly allowed us to use his post office as a collecting spot.

Thank you everybody.

Hazel Shellens,  
14 Stoneleigh Avenue,  
Earlsdon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank you for sending me your 'Excellent E.C.H.O.' and especially the article on the Young Ornithologists' Club (February 1980). Considering your problem on space you did us proud. I will certainly keep you informed if we raise any new members from the publication. I thought it would probably reach more people's attention than through the Telegraph. Local news should in my opinion be the lifeline of any community and can only help in arresting the declining standards by showing that people still care. I think you have a great little paper, keep it up, you're doing a great job!

Peter Madge,  
56 Frisby Road,  
Tile Hill

If you have something to say on local issues, please write to us via the E.C.H.O. BOX, in Earlsdon Library.

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## Earlsdon Bought Off Again?

The local community now knows the truth about the Social Services Committee's ambitious plans to renovate Broadway School for use as a 15-place unit for the frail elderly, a 90-place luncheon club and (in association with Age Concern) a Handicraft and Leisure Centre for the active elderly. Each unit will draw elderly people from all over the city. The City Council must be applauded because in local government terms the project is cost-effective, imaginative and innovative. The officers and councillors who came along to the public meeting on 18th March to explain their proposals must be thanked for their lucid presentations. The majority may now feel that the most effective compromise has been realised.

Certainly at this stage there is every reason to hope that the proposed joint Social Services/Age Concern/local community Management Committee will be able to ensure that many, if not all of the community activities suggested by the Broadway Steering Committee can in fact take place in the building at evenings and weekends. The Director of Social Services said at the meeting that he thought 90% of the present suggestions were compatible with Social Services use of the building.

However, Earlsdon (an area remember without a secondary school, let alone a community college) should not lose sight of the fact that 1981 marks the year when we had our best opportunity to secure our own multi-purpose community centre. . . and our hopes were dashed. I have a feeling that with land and cash shortages the opportunity may not present itself again, ever. Let us now hope that the tremendous community spirit present in the E.C.H.O. area - which at the moment is all dressed up with very few places to go - can be focussed on Broadway. If not then Earlsdon will have lost much more than a well fought campaign. And the City Council will have lost the opportunity to harness one of the most potent forces at its disposal - a community willing and able to care for its own residents.

Derek Player,  
36 Broadway,  
Earlsdon.



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# WOMEN AT RISK

The fear of being attacked, especially at night, deters many women in Coventry from venturing out alone. On 7th March an evening protest march by women to highlight the problem included Spencer Park in its route through the city. Incidents involving women in Spencer Park (ranging from 'flashings' to violent attacks) have presented a continuous problem that has not yet been solved and is unlikely to be in the near future.

We approached two Coventry women's organisations and the police for their views:

A spokesperson for the Coventry Women's Group feels that the problem might be to some extent alleviated if street lighting were improved, and extra policing carried out. However, the problem is bound to stay with us if the urban design remains the same. The number of underpasses and bridges provides too many opportunities for those making the attacks. It would be extremely difficult to eradicate attacks altogether in Spencer Park, simply because it is a fairly large open space which is not overlooked and cannot be easily seen from the road.

The inclination on the part of the offenders to make these attacks cannot be prevented. What the appropriate authorities should be thinking about is how urban areas can be designed to avoid giving opportunities to would-be attackers.

It was also pointed out that there should be a serious attempt, although this would of course take years, to alter male attitudes. Whilst male violence cannot be completely stopped, at least male harassment of women may be cut down. Many men simply do not realise that women do not treat it as a compliment if they are approached by complete strangers, and this can be quite frightening, particularly at night.

More tolerance in the laws on offensive weapons is also seen as necessary to enable women to have some form of defence if attacked.

The Coventry Women's Group meet in the upstairs room at the Elastic Inn (near Pool Meadow) at 7.30 pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays in the month, and any new members are welcome to join in discussions on issues affecting women.

The reaction of women who have been raped varies greatly from tremendous guilt to anger. Some women immediately report it to the police, some

tell friends or relatives and others keep it a close held secret, sometimes for many years. The Coventry Rape Crisis Centre has been set up to offer emotional support, help and information to any woman who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

One of the major concerns of the Coventry group is over what might be termed 'black spots' within the city. Women are particularly vulnerable in subways, poorly lit backstreets and parks. Whilst we would not wish to advocate that women avoid venturing out alone at night, clearly an area like Spencer Park poses a more serious threat as it is usually deserted and very poorly lit at night. However recently there have been an increasing number of reports of women being approached during the day.

The first Rape Crisis Centre in Britain was opened in London in 1977 and the response to the centre was so great that other centres were obviously much needed. They have now been opened in several cities including Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol and Manchester.

We hope that as more women continue to report and discuss rapes and sexual assaults more openly, there will be a change in attitudes towards women's safety and such myths as "she asked for it" will become a thing of the past.

The Coventry Rape Crisis Centre can be contacted on Mondays between 7.00 and 10.00 pm (tel 57709) or by post to P.O. Box 176, Coventry.

Detective Superintendent Jim Byrne said that the public should not be over-alarmed about Spencer Park as the number of incidents did not warrant this. He said "Any public open space in this day and age brings its fair share of attacks on people, be it mugging, indecency or hooligan behaviour. Patrolling police officers are briefed to patrol open spaces not only to detect this sort of offence but, more importantly, to prevent them." The police have at times had plain clothes policemen and policewomen working in the area and have carried out numerous interviews, with some success. Detective Superintendent Byrne stressed that all incidents involving women, no matter how slight should be reported to the police.

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## Restore the no.1

As promised, we received this response from Mr J. Stokes, Operations Manager, (East Division), W.M.P.T.E., to our last month's article on the cuts in the No. 1 bus service.

"Unfortunately the average number of passengers on Service 1 during the evenings before the service was withdrawn was approximately five. Loadings (which were physically checked to take into account passes and travelcards) were not much better on Sundays when some journeys had a few more but others were virtually empty.

When the Executive went before the Traffic Commissioners to seek approval for its programme of service reductions, the Commissioner referred to the loadings on Service 1 being amongst the lowest he had seen and he commented that he was surprised the Executive had not adjusted the service at an earlier date.

Faced with the decision of your County Council to reduce services the Executive had to look at parts of its network that were the least utilised so that the minimum number of people were affected. Certainly Service 1 was in this category and this is why the daytime service was reduced and the Sunday service withdrawn.

The difficulties and problems to a relatively small number caused by the withdrawal of the service as you described in your article represent social problems that can be met but at a cost. To maintain the former service would have been costly and the elected members of the County Council in formulating the policy that

W.M.P.T.E. services should be reduced took a decision in the knowledge that social problems were likely to occur but that the money necessary to avoid them was not available."

The E.C.H.O. Committee thanks W.M.P.T.E. for sending this reasoned reply. However, we feel that its matter-of-factness does not do justice to the strength of local feeling on the matter. Our view is that the large and angry response to our original questionnaire merits a campaign to improve cross-city bus services for our area, and we intend to initiate such a campaign.

We note, however, that the Labour Party manifesto for the West Midlands County Council elections pledges a return to the level of bus service before last autumn's cuts. In other words, if Labour wins control of the County Council (and the pollsters seem to think that this is quite likely), the No.1 bus service will be restored. In these circumstances, we propose to begin preparing the groundwork for a campaign, but to defer immediate action in case it is no longer necessary, following the elections on 7th May.

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Photo by Barry K. Smith



The new CO-OP SUPERMARKET in EARLSDON STREET is to open on 14th May. In an exclusive interview Mr. James Charlton, Chief Executive of Coventry and District Co-operative Society, told E.C.H.O. that the new shop will be opened by Mr. L.J. Makepeace, President of the Society. There will be a number of special opening events and offers - details in our May issue.

## COMPETITION



If you are 16 or under you can enter our special BIRTHDAY COMPETITION. You could win a magnificent Easter Egg, worth well over £10, donated by Hayes Newsagents, Hearsall Lane. See how many words of four letters or more you can make out of 'Happy Easter', excluding 'happy' and 'Easter'. There should be no proper nouns (ask your teacher if you're not sure!), foreign or plural words in your list. Send your entries to us via the E.C.H.O. Box in Earlsdon Library.

CLOSING DATE: Tuesday 14th April - so hurry!

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## SHOPPING

HEATING & VENTILATING INSTALLATIONS has moved from the top of Hearsall Lane into the former Co-op premises in SPON END. Now featuring computerised stock control these D.I.Y. heating and plumbing stockists intend to be more competitive than before, catering for a wider range and a larger area.

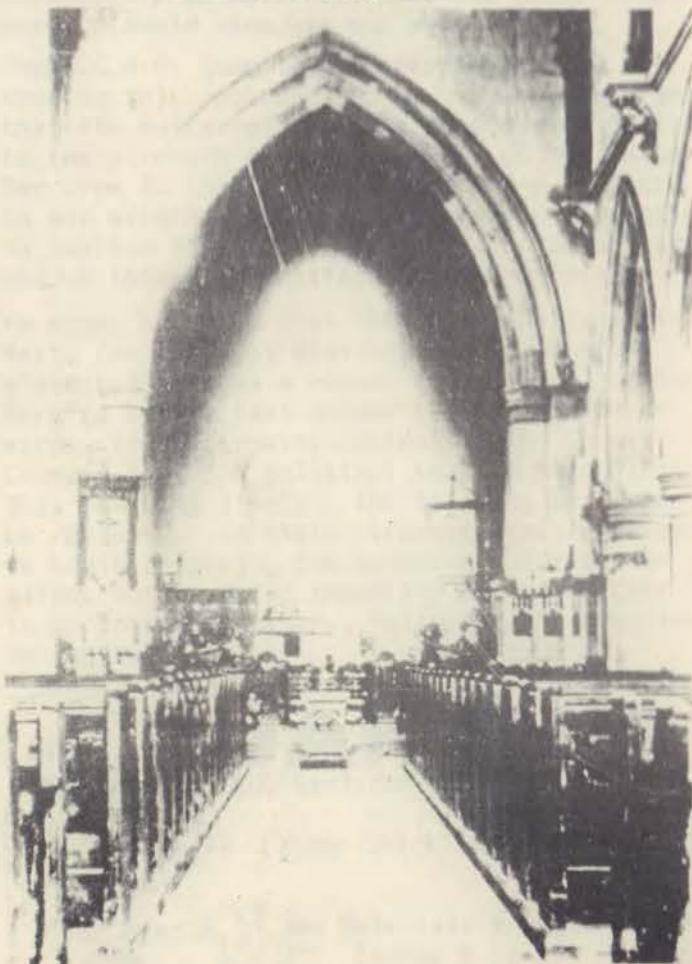
EARLSDON COUNTRY COTTAGE? They are not too certain of the name yet, but Anne Williams and her daughter Karen have great plans for their new fresh food venture at 190 EARLSDON AVENUE NORTH (formerly Aston's television repairs). They say that when they open later this month they will be "bringing good wholesome food from the country into the town". Fresh chickens, ducks, farm eggs, farmhouse cheddar, jersey cream, some fresh vegetables and soft fruits in season will all be on sale. In addition you will be able to buy some frozen foods - game pies and pasties - as well as jams, marmalades and honey. All the produce will be local and mainly from Warwickshire farms.

### Val & John

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### OLD PHOTO



St Thomas' Church, The Butts, before it was demolished.